

DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 257 221

EA 017 787

AUTHOR Miner, John B.
TITLE Using Managerial Role Motivation Training to Overcome Motivational Deficiencies.
PUB DATE 28 Aug 84
NOTE 7p.
AVAILABLE FROM Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American Psychological Association (Toronto, Ontario, Canada, August 24-28, 1984).
PUB TYPE Speeches/Conference Papers (150) -- Reports - Evaluative/Feasibility (142)
EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Attitude Change; *Business Administration; Leadership Training; *Management Development; Managerial Occupations; *Motivation; Personality; Personality Change; *Productivity; *Professional Development; Research; Self Concept; Skill Development; Training Methods

ABSTRACT

Research on motivation to manage can be summarized in five points: (1) motivation to manage is a major factor for success; (2) motivation to manage declined in students from the 1960's to the 1970's; (3) this decline is evident in the relevant age groups; (4) differences between United States students and foreign students place the United States at a disadvantage; and (5) managerial role motivation training is an approach to alleviate this problem. The training takes a variety of forms, but all the variants cast participants in a managerial role, with the primary approach being a mixture of lecture and discussion. Studies of the success and effects on participants of these training programs are summarized as follows: Participants in 90 percent of the programs studied increased their motivation to manage; participants increased their desire to exercise power; and women changed in these programs as readily as did men. Two questions are raised: How can basic personality be changed? Are other kinds of training as good or better? The author points out that managerial role motivation training does not cause basic personality change. Other types of training have been studied and appear to have something in common with managerial role motivation training. Until comparative research and cost benefit analyses are completed, the positive evidence in the studies of managerial role motivation training recommends it as the way to cope with the management talent shortages. (MD)

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Using Managerial Role Motivation
Training to Overcome Motivational
Deficiencies

John B. Miner

Presentation at the American Psychological
Association meetings - Toronto, Canada
August 28, 1934

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The overall thrust of research on motivation to manage carried out over the past 28 years may be summarized in five points. Although I will not include specific documentation here, information on these points is available in four books and over 50 other publications. The five points are as follows:

1. Motivation to manage is a major causal factor making for managerial success in relatively large, bureaucratic organizations - particularly business firms.
2. In the student population from which U.S. managerial talent derives, motivation to manage declined sharply over an approximately 10 year period, from the early 1960s to the early 1970s. Since that time it has stabilized, but at a relatively low level. While 20 years ago males had considerably higher motivation to manage than females, this difference no longer exists.
3. The decline in motivation to manage is now manifesting itself within company ranks as the relevant age groups move on to the age of managerial performance.
4. There appear to be differences between students from the U.S. and from other countries of the world indicating that the decline in motivation to manage has placed this country at a relative disadvantage insofar as managerial talent supplies are concerned. This could well account for the relatively low level of productivity growth that the U.S. has been experiencing. It also suggests that unless something is done, the U.S. may remain at a substantial competitive disadvantage relative to other countries for some time to come.
6. An approach that can be used to deal with these problems is managerial role motivation training.

It is this training that I want to concentrate on today.

The Nature of Managerial Role Motivation Training

The training has taken a variety of forms, largely because individual instructors appear unable to resist the temptation to innovate and place the stamp of their own individuality on what they present. In the end this has proved a boon, because it has permitted study of the effects produced by a wide range of variations. All of the variants, however, have served to cast participants in the managerial role. This is done by asking them to assume that role as they attempt to deal with problems of poor performance among subordinates, and also as they attempt to assess their own actual or potential managerial role performance. The consequence is that participants can hardly escape thinking about themselves as managers.

Much greater detail on the content of the training is available in a series of books dealing with the subject. The first of these was The Management of Ineffective Performance published in 1963 by McGraw-Hill. Subsequently in 1966, a slightly abridged paperback version appeared with the title Introduction to Industrial Clinical Psychology. In 1974 W.B. Saunders published The Challenge

of Managing and also a companion volume entitled Case Analyses and Description of Managerial Role Motivation Training. A forthcoming book to be published by Random House with the title People Problems - The Executive's Answer Book contains much of the material covered in the previous volumes but presents it with a somewhat different focus.

At various times cases, films, texts, related readings, and role playing have been incorporated in the training. The primary approach, however, has typically been a mixture of lecture and discussion.

The Changes Produced

The effects produced by training have been assessed in a number of ways, but the most common procedure has been to administer the Miner Sentence Completion Scale - Form H just prior to training and then again at some point after completion. This scale provides a measure of motivation to manage. To my knowledge there have been 10 different studies of this kind conducted, involving some 15 presentations of the course. The results may be summarized as follows -

1. Overall increases in motivation to manage have been established in 90 percent of the studies.
2. Increases in the various components of motivation to manage have been demonstrated from 43 to 71 percent of the time, depending on the particular component involved. Meaningful decreases have never been found. The data suggest that with large enough groups to study all components will be found to increase. However, the most consistent changes are -

The development of a more positive attitude to authority.
A shift to greater assertiveness.
An increase in the strength of the person's desire to exercise power.

3. Comparisons of trained and untrained (control) groups have repeatedly indicated that it is the training that causes the change.
4. Variations in course administration appear to make little difference. Those variants studied include -

Once a week meetings spread over several months, three times a week meetings spread over several months, a concentrated three-day short course.
Participant groups varying from 10 to over 100.
Lecture almost exclusively, lecture and discussion, the inclusion of case analyses, role playing.
Sizable variations in the degree to which the training focuses on the analysis of subordinates' poor performance.
No reading materials and materials of different kinds.

5. Women change as readily as men.
6. Changes are still clearly in evidence up to a year and a half after the completion of training. Studies with the Miner Sentence Completion Scale have not extended further out in time.

7. The percent of those exposed to training who increase their motivation to manage varies in the range of 60 to 75 percent depending on the nature of the group involved and the assumptions made about what constitutes true change.
8. Groups can be selected for training so as to permit an even higher proportionate change. When the Tomkins-Horn Picture Arrangement Test is given prior to training it has been found that those with certain characteristics are most likely to increase their motivation to manage. These are people who have -

A strong activity drive
A strong independence need.

In contrast, more passive-dependent individuals are relatively unresponsive to the training.

Another approach to studying change involves following the career histories of managers who have and have not experienced managerial role motivation training. In one such study two groups of managers from a single company were compared over a five year period. At the start of the study, before any training was carried out, the groups were at the same average managerial level as determined by the company's job evaluation system and had the same average rated potential for advancement as determined by the company's management appraisal procedures. Five years later the groups differed sharply -

	Exposed to Managerial Role Motivation Training	No Such Training
Promoted 3 or more levels	28%	21%
Promoted 1 or 2 levels	58	36
No change in level	14	33
Demoted	0	10
	100%	100%

These results apply, of course, only to those who stayed with the company for five years. Among those who left, the best index of performance is a separation rating given by the immediate superior. Here the results were as follows.

	Exposed to Managerial Role Motivation Training	No Such Training
Recommended for rehire if available	69%	30%
Recommendation against rehire (many were fired)	31	70
	100%	100%

It is on the basis of this accumulated evidence that I recommend using managerial role motivation training in an effort to cope with managerial talent shortages produced by the decline in motivation to manage. Ideally a company would select the best possible young managerial candidates available and then give them managerial role motivation training at or near the time they are to be moved into their first managerial positions. This training can be given in-house or through attendance at an external program. Both procedures appear to produce the desired results.

Possible Problems

There are two questions that can, and indeed have been raised regarding my conclusion -

1. How can you possibly change basic personality this way?
2. Are not there other kinds of training that are as good or better for achieving the needed motivational change?

As to basic personality change, I do not really believe that is what managerial role motivation training does. There is for example no reason to believe activity drive levels or independence needs are affected. What probably is being changed is something akin to a set of interests or attitudes. This change is then reinforced and maintained by existing role prescriptions in the on-going work environment or in the case of students by the anticipation of future role prescriptions. Also changes tend to occur only in those who have a predisposition toward such changes - that is, no serious personality blocks to change exist, such as a passive-dependent character structure for instance.

In any event whatever it is that is changed in the person carries substantial behavioral baggage with it. High motivation to manage people, whether they come by the characteristic naturally or acquire it through training, are perceived as behaving very differently, and more effectively, in managerial jobs.

As to the second question, regarding alternative training procedures, we can only speculate at present. However, there are other kinds of training that have been the subject of some research study and that appear to have something in common with managerial role motivation training. Among these are -

Fiedler's leader match procedure
McClelland's need for power training
Vroom's decision tree approach
Various behavior modification programs for managers such as
that of Sorcher and Goldstein

These training procedures all derive from different theoretical perspectives, and all differ from managerial role motivation training in this regard as well. Yet research on several of these approaches indicates that they do not bring about change in the way the underlying theory would posit. A likely alternative explanation is that they produce change because they increase motivation to manage.

What all the approaches have in common is a managerial role sensitization process that can interact with the basic personalities of certain people to produce

change. In some cases there is actual behavioral rehearsal of a managerial role; in some cases there is internal role rehearsal in the mind. The latter is most prevalent in managerial role motivation training for instance. It probably matters little which occurs, although internal rehearsal may have the advantage that fewer defenses and blocks to change are aroused. The essential point is that conditions that can make for change in motivation to manage appear to exist within all these training procedures. Accordingly there is a good possibility that all are effective methods of improving motivation to manage.

Which then to use? Clearly comparative research and cost-benefit analyses are needed. In the interim, however, managerial role motivation training appears to offer several advantages. For one thing we know that it increases motivation to manage; in the other instances we can only conjecture. Second, managerial role motivation training provides a substantial side-benefit in that managers also learn a good deal about handling performance problems in those who report to them.

Converging evidence from a variety of directions argues strongly for the use of managerial role motivation training by companies having concerns regarding present and future managerial talent supplies. The likely return on the investment is substantial.